SPECIAL USE OF THE TITHE AS A REVENUE-RAISING MEASURE IN THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY SANJAQ OF ALEPPO

BY

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Introduction

This article will examine the changes in the agricultural tithe of the Sanjaq of Aleppo that were introduced by provincial authorities circa 1551-52 to obtain for the state a greater share of revenue from a shrinking pool of agricultural revenue receipts. The two changes in the tithe that occur at this time are tailored to and distinguished by the two types of tithe assessment applied in the Sanjaq. A third measure involving the tithe, the so-called “new tithe” (şār-i jedid), which represents the imposition of the tithe where it had formerly not been required, was also introduced at the same time and with the same objective. This new tithe was likewise subject to either of the two changes made in the tithe assessment. Hence, the tithe at this time represents a broad front on which the objective of increasing the state’s agricultural revenue receipts from the Sanjaq was launched. Two of the three tithe measures comprising this front (the new tithe is excluded) are here the focus of investigation. This focus on the tithe, in addition, will lay bare much of the working of the provincial taxation system as regards the agricultural taxation. Jabal Sim‘an, one of the Sanjaq’s most important districts, is used in the study to illustrate the tithe situation.

1) This article represents a recasting of findings presented in my Ph.D. dissertation, “The Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Sanjaq of Aleppo: A Study of Provincial Taxation” (Columbia University, New York, 1981) (hereafter cited as “Aleppo”). Neither article nor dissertation would have been realized without access to the rich archival offering of the Archives of the Prime Minister in Istanbul. I would like to
SOURCE: Based on the villages and mezra'as recorded in Tax Register V (BA, TT 493), as located on the following maps: Maps 9-14 by René Dussaud (Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale (Paris, 1927)/, Karte des Liwa Haleb und eines Theiles des Liwa Dschebel Bereket by Martin Hartmann (Das Liwa Haleb /Aleppo/ und ein Teil des Liwa Dschebel Bereket /Berlin, 1894/), French Map of Levant, scale 1:50,000, German Map Syria, scale 1:50,000, Map of Ottoman General Staff (this is not an official title), scale 1:200,000, French Map of Levant, scale 1:200,000, and French Map of Syria, scale 1:200,000.